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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KINSHASA 000949

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SUBJECT: UN TEAM CRITICIZES RWANDA FOR CNDP LINKS, DRC FOR
FDLR LINKS

REF: KIGALI 752

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. Samuel Brock for reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Two members of the UN Group of Experts for the DRC (UNSC 1807) detailed on October 27 to Poloffs what they claimed was very strong evidence of Rwandan support for the CNDP, as well as extensive FARDC-FDLR military and commercial collaboration. The UN team is focusing on several bank accounts in Gisenyi, reportedly used to channel funds from Europe to the CNDP. According to the team, the CNDP actively recruits in Congolese refugee camps in Rwanda and there are indications that Rwandan units may be operating in and around the Virunga National Park. The UN team also believes that prominent Rwandan businessman Tribert Rujugiro, who is currently under arrest in London on a South African tax evasion charge, is involved in financing the CNDP. On the DRC side, the group maintained that several senior FARDC commanders at the front were closely collaborating with FDLR forces, in some cases supplying the rebel group with large amounts of ammunition. In North Kivu, the FDLR operates a mafia-style system, running protection rackets and threatening the local population. FARDC and FDLR elements cooperate closely in cultivating and transporting marijuana, as well as in gold mining and charcoal trading. In South Kivu, where the UN team claims the FDLR enjoys handsome profits from its gold mining operations, Burundian mining houses benefit from their relations with the FDLR. particularly with respect to gold mining. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Polcouns and Poloff met on October 27 with Jason Stearns and Dino Mahtani from the UN Group of Experts for the DRC (UNSC 1807). Stearns (strictly protect) provided a briefing on the team's initial findings, which, according to Stearns, demonstrated conclusive collaboration between the Government of Rwanda (GOR) and the CNDP on one hand, and between the FARDC and FDLR on the other hand. Stearns said the team would circulate a draft report to the UN Sanctions Committee around November 21; a public document would most likely be available by the second week of December. In several cases, the team will specifically identify individuals profiting from their links with the rebel groups.

Rwandan-CNDP Links

¶3. (C) Stearns maintained that the team had found credible evidence that active duty Rwandan forces (RDF) personnel were in the DRC assisting the CNDP. Stearns admitted that the main basis for these claims, and also for claims of close FARDC/FDLR links, was eyewitness accounts from deserters.

However, Stearns said that these accounts, which numerous and wide-spread, were all consistent.

¶ 14. (C) The CNDP, according to Stearns, operates a radio station in Gisenyi and there are several Gisenyi bank accounts, including two in the name of Nkunda's wife, that the team believes the CNDP uses to channel funds from Congolese exiles in Europe. Stearns said the team would soon send the GOR specifics on the accounts in writing. In one refugee camp in Rwanda, the CNDP is actively recruiting young men. Stearns added that at the camp, Rwandan police were present, as well as demobilized RDF soldiers. At the Virunga National Park, the team heard frequent testimony that "Kinyarwanda speaking soldiers, who also spoke English, but no French," operated in the area. In all these cases, Stearns stressed, Rwanda was, at the very least, "turning a blind eye."

FARDC-FDLR Cooperation

¶ 15. (C) Regarding FARDC-FDLR links, Stearns said that this collaboration had simply carried on from cooperation during the 1998-2003 war. Several FARDC brigade commanders were deeply involved with the FDLR, and there was strong enough evidence against at least two FARDC colonels that the team would name them in its report. The FARDC regularly gives FDLR forces large amounts of ammunition, sometimes 20-30,000 rounds at a time; in one case a brigade commander authorized the transfer of 50,000 rounds of ammunition to the FDLR. According to Stearns, numerous FARDC units cooperated closely

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with the FDLR, including the 81st, 11th, 14th, and 15th brigades. Stearns noted that because the FDLR remains active, its units "pin down" CNDP forces that would otherwise be free to engage the FARDC.

¶ 16. (C) Stearns said that the team concluded that the FDLR remains a formidable fighting organization, although the oft-cited figure of 6-7,000 combatants is probably slightly exaggerated. At least one thousand from this figure includes inactive and reserve forces. Internally, the FDLR is well-organized, running mafia-type protection rackets throughout North and South Kivu. The group is particularly strong in the mining sector in the Kivus. According to Stearns, the FDLR forces local artisans to sell gold to it at \$15 per gram, half the market price. The FDLR often "makes an example" of miners who object to the group's strong-arm tactics. The FDLR, in the team's view, remains a serious threat to the civilian population.

North Kivu: Mining, Charcoal, and Marijuana

¶ 17. (C) The UN team pointed to widespread commercial links between the FARDC and FDLR in North Kivu, particularly in the mining, charcoal, and marijuana trade. Because marijuana cultivation is illegal in the DRC, the FARDC leaves the production to the FDLR. However, the FDLR then hands the marijuana over to FARDC elements that provide protection and transport of the drug across the Ugandan border. According to Stearns, the annual trade in North Kivu charcoal was worth approximately \$30 million, with 90% of it coming out of the Virunga National Park. The FDLR, working with FARDC elements, reportedly controls most of this trade. Stearns said that, ironically, Rwanda was the biggest customer of FDLR-produced charcoal, as the GOR had abolished import controls on charcoal, rendering it virtually impossible to identify the producer. In the gold mining sector, the FDLR controlled "a hundred or so" mines, while the CNDP only controlled two small gold mines in North Kivu.

South Kivu: An Important "Economic Backwater" for the FDLR

¶8. (C) Mahtani emphasized that South Kivu had developed into an extremely profitable "backwater" for FDLR operations because of the lucrative gold mining in the area, the lack of a CNDP presence, and its ability to operate from the cover of the Kahuzi-Biega National Park. In many cases, FARDC elements worked with the FDLR. The UN team has been scrutinizing mining trading houses in Bukavu for links with FDLR. Stearns said that the mining houses in Bukavu "know very well" that they are buying FDLR gold. All the major houses demand to know the quality, as well as the security at production sites, so they would all quickly know who the upstream producer is. The majority of the FDLR gold in South Kivu is shipped out through Burundi and on to a refinery in Dubai. Stearns added that the UN report would recommend sanctions against four Bukavu gold mining houses with Burundian links. Stearns complained that the Government of Burundi (GOB) had been extremely uncooperative with the UN team, refusing to share basic statistics. Stearns asked for USG assistance to elicit better cooperation from the GOB, particularly from the Ministry of Mines and the Ministry of Finance.

Powerful Rwandan Business Tycoon Supporting CNDP

¶9. (C) Stearns said that the UN team strongly suspected that Tribert Rujugiro, one of the most powerful businessmen in Rwanda, was financing the CNDP. Rujugiro, who financed Kagame's RPA when it was fighting the Habyarimana regime, is reportedly very close to the Rwandan President. Stearns said the UN team had obtained a hard copy email, in which Rujugiro allegedly asked a Dubai contact to release \$120,000 to pay CNDP soldiers. The UN team is trying to obtain the original email from Yahoo.

¶10. (C) In the meantime, Rujugiro was recently arrested in London on charges of tax evasion in South Africa. Stearns maintained that one of Rujugiro's companies, Super Match, was also extensively involved in cigarette smuggling in the region. Stearns said the UN would look for assistance from

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UK and South African authorities in its investigation into Rujugiro's CNDP connections.

¶11. (C) Comment: While much of these accusations are based on eyewitness reports, the UN team strongly believes that there is a large body of evidence supporting the claims of close FARDC-FDLR cooperation, as well as Rwandan support for the CNDP. Clearly, mafia-style arrangements now control large swaths of North and South Kivu. It is equally evident that many of the actors in this conflict have a commercial reason for maintaining the status quo. End Comment.

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